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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/01/08

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ARTICLES:

(1) Sankei-FNN poll on Aso cabinet, political parties

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
September 27, 2008

Questions & Answers

(Note) Figures shown in percentage. Figures in parentheses denote findings from the last Sankei-FNN survey conducted Sept. 10-11.

Q: Do you support the Aso cabinet?

Yes 44.6
No 35.7
Don't know (D/K), etc. 19.7

Q: Which political party do you support?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 31.7 (29.1)
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 25.9 (23.8)
New Komeito (NK) 4.1 (3.5)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2.5 (3.2)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.3 (1.7)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.1 (0.2)
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0.1 (0.0)
Other answers (O/A) 1.0 (1.2)
None 32.3 (35.0)
D/K, etc. 1.0 (2.3)

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Q: What's your impression of the Aso cabinet's lineup?

None the better for the change 30.7
Featureless 24.9
Balance conscious 16.3
Competent 9.5
Fresh 6.1
Surprising 5.2
D/K, etc. 7.3

Q: Who is the most hopeful minister in the Aso cabinet?

Health, Labor & Welfare Minister Yoichi Masuzoe 21.6
Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries Minister Shigeru Ishiba 16.7
State Minister for Declining Birthrate Yuko Obuchi 12.3
State Minister for Financial Services Shoichi Nakagawa 4.6
State Minister for Consumer Affairs Seiko Noda 4.6
State Minister for Economic & Fiscal Policy Kaoru Yosano 2.5
Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone 1.2
Internal Affairs & Communications Minister Kunio Hatoyama 0.8
Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito 0.4
Land, Infrastructure & Transport Minister Nariaki Nakayama ASTERISK
0.3
Justice Minister Eisuke Mori 0.2
Economy, Trade & Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai 0.2
Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada 0.2
National Public Safety Commission Chairman Tsutomu Sato 0.2
State Minister for Administrative Reform Akira Amari 0.2
Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology Minister Ryu
Shionoya 0.1
Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura 0.1
O/A 0.6
None 20.1
D/K, etc. 13.1
(ASTERISK Nakayama resigned from his post on Sept. 28, and
Kazuyoshi Kaneko is in his place.)

Q: What do you want the Aso cabinet to do?

Fiscal policy to cut down on waste 26.9 (30.4)
Social security, including healthcare and pension systems 25.0
(29.1)
Economic stimulus measures 20.4 (18.5)

Consumer affairs, including food safety 9.1 (---)
Social divide 5.7 (---)
Tax reform, including the consumption tax 4.1 (3.9)
North Korea 2.8 (2.4)
Global warming 2.5 (4.4)
D/K, etc. 3.5 (1.1)

Q: Who do you think is most appropriate for prime minister?

Prime Minister Taro Aso 22.6
DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa 16.1
Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi 13.2
Former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike 4.7
Former LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Nobuteru Ishihara 3.9
DPJ Deputy President Naoto Kan 3.0
Economic & Fiscal Policy Minister Kaoru Yosano 2.2
DPJ Vice President Katsuya Okada 2.1
DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama 1.7

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Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries Minister Shigeru Ishiba 1.6
Former DPJ Vice President Seiji Maehara 1.6
Other ruling party lawmakers 1.5
Other opposition party lawmakers 2.5
None 18.4
D/K, etc. 4.9

Q: What do you think is most important for the extraordinary Diet session convened Sept. 24?

Enact the supplementary budget 31.1
Dissolve the House of Representatives for a snap election 28.7
Respond to the U.S. financial crisis 22.6
Pass a bill to establish a consumer affairs agency 6.6
Amend a law to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean 4.3
D/K, etc. 6.7

Q: What's your image of the LDP and the DPJ?

Good policy
LDP 37.5
DPJ 44.8
D/K, etc. 17.7

Action
LDP 54.1
DPJ 26.1
D/K, etc. 19.8

Political stance
LDP 36.0
DPJ 45.2
D/K, etc. 18.8

Favorite party in next election for the House of Representatives
LDP 40.7
DPJ 48.5
D/K, etc. 10.8

Q: What do you think about the Aso cabinet and DPJ President Ozawa?

Prime Minister Aso's imprint shows in his cabinet's lineup
Yes 63.0
No 27.8
D/K, etc. 9.2

Prime Minister Aso's appointees to his cabinet were disappointing
Yes 33.4
No 50.8
D/K, etc. 15.8

The Aso cabinet will fail to push for reforms
Yes 59.7
No 30.4
D/K, etc. 9.9

Sorry for former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike because she is the only one with no important post among the five candidates in the LDP presidential election

Yes 30.3

No 66.0

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D/K, etc. 3.7

Questionable about 2nd-, 3rd-generation lawmakers becoming prime minister

Yes 58.2

No 37.9

D/K, etc. 3.9

Wanting DPJ President Ozawa to become prime minister

Yes 43.5 (30.5)

No 51.6 (62.7)

D/K, etc. 4.9 (6.8)

DPJ President Ozawa should run only from his home electoral district in Iwate Prefecture

Yes 42.5

No 42.0

D/K, etc. 15.5

Wanting DPJ President Ozawa to field showcase candidates like women and celebrities in the next election for the House of Representatives

Yes 16.5

No 78.0

D/K, etc. 5.5

Q: Which political party would you like to vote for in your proportional representation bloc at the time of the next election for the House of Representatives?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 36.0 (34.3)

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 39.3 (34.6)

New Komeito (NK) 5.1 (5.1)

Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 3.9 (4.8)

Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 2.1 (2.4)

People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 1.2 (0.6)

New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0.3 (0.6)

O/A 4.6 (6.6)

D/K, etc. 7.5 (11.0)

Q: What form of government would you like to see after the next election for the House of Representatives?

LDP-led coalition government 24.1 (21.1)

DPJ-led coalition government 32.1 (29.8)

Grand coalition involving both the LDP and the DPJ 38.5 (41.4)

D/K, etc. 5.3 (7.7)

Q: Do you support the idea of extending the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean?

Yes 43.6

No 43.7

D/K, etc. 12.7

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Sept. 25 by the Sankei Shimbun and Fuji News Network (FNN) over the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. For the survey, a total of 1,000 persons were sampled from among men and women, aged 20 and over, across the nation.

Aso cabinet's inaugural ratings from media polls (Yes = support; No

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= don't support)

Media sources Yes No Date

Sankei Shimbun 44.6 35.7 9/25
Asahi Shimbun 48.0 36.0 9/24-25
Mainichi Shimbun 45.0 26.0 9/24-25
Yomiuri Shimbun 49.5 33.4 9/24-25
Nikkei Shimbun 53.0 40.0 9/24-25
Kyodo News 48.6 32.9 9/24-25

Cabinet ratings upon inauguration (Yes = support; No = don't support)

Prime Minister Yes No Date
Taro Aso 44.6 35.7 9/08
Yasuo Fukuda 55.3 28.7 9/07
Shinzo Abe 63.9 17.0 9/06
Junichiro Koizumi 80.9 6.9 4/01
Yoshiro Mori 37.6 29.6 4/00
Keizo Obuchi 26.5 52.5 7/98
Ryutaro Hashimoto 58.3 19.2 1/96
Tomiichi Murayama 47.7 47.1 6/94
Tsutomu Hata 62.1 32.4 4/94
Morihiro Hosokawa 83.4 11.0 8/93

(2) U.S. Treasury Undersecretary McCormick expects Japan to continue to cooperate in efforts to stabilize financial markets

NIKKEI (Internet edition) (Full)
October 1, 2008

By Yusuke Yoneyama in Washington

U.S. Undersecretary of the Treasury for International Affairs in a briefing to members of the international press corps on Sept. 30 lauded efforts by major countries to stabilize international financial markets, saying, "Combined cooperative actions were taken, and we hope progress will continue." He stated his intention to strengthen policy cooperation in such areas as supplying liquidity to the market.

Undersecretary McCormick praised Japan for "being an extremely active collaborator in such areas as supplying liquidity." "We hope to see continued cooperation," he added.

On the spreading global credit crunch, he pointed out, "We have kept in close contact with monetary authorities and central banks of every country in monitoring the markets." However, on actions to stabilize markets, he noted, "It is not necessary for every country to take the same countermeasures as the United States." He indicated that in his view there was no insistence on such steps as purchasing non-performing assets from financial institutions using public funds.

Commenting on the financial stabilization act that the U.S. House of Representatives had rejected, he explained, "We will continue our efforts to seek the understanding of the public that the impact of turmoil in the financial market would extend to their daily lives." He stressed the government's plan to closely cooperate with the Congress, aiming at swift passage of the act.

(3) Interview with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone: Close cooperation with U.S. on North Korea's nuclear arms

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TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 1, 2008

-- The six-party talks to discuss North Korea's nuclear development program have come to a standstill. What do you think will be Japan's role in finding a breakthrough?

"I met with U.S. Secretary of State Rice during the recent UN General Assembly. We confirmed that both countries should take joint steps by working in close cooperation. We must make that nation resume its disablement process at Yongbyon. I have hopes for Assistant Secretary of State Hill's visit to Pyongyang."

-- North Korea has pledged to reinvestigate abduction cases

involving Japanese nationals. However, it informed Japan of its decision to put off the investigation. Do you think this is due to the effect of a political vacuum created by the resignation of former Prime Minister Fukuda?"

"Given the situation, it is regrettable that North Korea has suspended the commitment in that way. I am not sure whether the suspension was due to a political vacuum. The LDP held a presidential election, but I do not know what that country's intention now is. However, there is no change in the Japanese government's stance from that of the Fukuda administration. I want North Korea to start an investigation as soon as possible so as to settle the issue. I will work on North Korea aggressively."

-- It appears difficult for the ruling camp to secure a two-thirds majority in the Lower House. In that case, how will the ruling parties try to enact a bill amending the New Antiterrorism Special Measures Law for US-led Antiterrorism Operations in the Indian Ocean?

"For a start, we will do our utmost to maintain a two-thirds majority. It is important to strongly appeal the importance of the bill to the public and secure its understanding. All we can do is to tenaciously call on the opposition camp to cooperate."

-- Premier Putin is expected to come to Japan before the end of the year. What is your approach to settling the (Northern Territories) issue?

"We must aim for the establishment of a peace treaty, using every opportunity. The territorial issue is Japan's long-standing pending issue. (The Northern Territories) are an integral part of Japan." We must fairly and squarely advocate our view at the upcoming summit."

(4) Interview with Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada: Will pursue passage of bill for continuing refueling mission in Indian Ocean

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 1, 2008

-- There is a strong criticism of Japan for continuing its refueling mission in the India Ocean due to the sharp rise in crude oil prices.

"It is not a judgment that is made based on whether oil is costly or not in Japan. We can only make our public appeal with sincerity regarding the importance of doing things together (with the international community) from an internationally cooperative view."

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-- It seems that if the Lower House is dissolved, it would become impossible to take a revote on the bill extending the refueling mission.

"Uncertain factors are still gripping the issue, because it is the prime minister who must make that decision. I want to tenaciously pursue passage of the bill as long as there is a possibility."

-- What is your view on establishing a permanent law to enable the dispatch Self-Defense Forces' personnel as needed?

"Amid various disputes emerging throughout the world, it is very important for Japan to take part from the perspective of international cooperation. If Japan wants to swiftly take part (in international cooperation), then it is better for it to have a permanent law. I want to discuss the issue by all means."

-- Prime Minister Aso mentioned his intention to approve the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. What is your view on that?

"I think I must follow the government's stance. If Japan has the right of collective self-defense, it could have closer connection with various countries in Asia."

-- What makes you think that it is better for Japan to have the right of collective self-defense?

"For instance, there is the piracy issue. Even if various countries try to prevent piracy by dispatching their vessels, Japan cannot do so. What I mean is that we would build a relationship of trust among the militaries of various countries."

-- Local communities in Okinawa are demanding that the government revise the plan and shift the relocation site for Futenma Air Station's facilities into the sea.

"I would like to consider to what extent we can respond to their request, while taking into account their stance. I want them to understand that the government will not flatly turn down their request."

(5) Roadmap rational: Hamada

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)
October 1, 2008

TOKYO--New Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada assumed his post on Sept. 24, and the Okinawa Times interviewed him yesterday afternoon to hear his views regarding such issues as building an alternative facility for Futenma airfield, reforming the Defense Ministry, and refueling in the Indian Ocean.

-- Concerning the planned relocation of Futenma airfield, Okinawa wants the alternative facility's construction site moved out into the sea.

Hamada: The roadmap (to realign U.S. forces in Japan) is rational. It's considerably difficult to alter (the Futenma relocation plan). However, I will listen to Okinawa's views so we can obtain Okinawa's understanding, and we will have to scrutinize what we can do and

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what we cannot do. I'd like to listen to Okinawa while making effective use of the working teams.

-- The government says it will not change the relocation plan without rational reason. Okinawa Prefecture has been maintaining that it is rational to move the construction site out into the sea, given such factors as suffering from the noise.

Hamada: Whether that is rational or not, we will take it into consideration. We will also have to consider (the outcome of) an environmental impact assessment. We will listen to local communities, and we will look into their opinions including whether that is viable.

-- The government has so far discussed the issue of Futenma relocation under the initiative of the prime minister's office. Some of the key members are now gone. How will this affect the government's discussion?

Hamada: The government has handled this matter under the initiative of the prime minister's office. This way of doing things will not change suddenly. I don't think our discussion will be affected. I want to do what I can.

-- When it comes to the Defense Ministry's reform, there is some discrepancy between the plan you worked out in the Liberal Democratic Party and the plan the government has. How will you take it over?

Hamada: I will tackle the Defense Ministry's reform as a task of top priority. We are expected to explore the best possible system for national defense with public faith. I may be taking a different approach to that goal, but I share my predecessor's view. It's important to create a system under which we can integrate our organizations including the Defense Ministry's internal bureaus.

-- If the ruling parties should fail to garner two-thirds of the seats in a general election for the House of Representatives, it

will be difficult to create a similar bill for the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean.

Hamada: For now, we have no choice but to clearly explain its purpose and Japan's national interests in our public accountability. Also, in the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) as well, there are people who make a levelheaded judgment.

(6) MSDF to scale down drill due to soaring oil price

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 1, 2008

Referring to a MSDF drill the cancellation of which had been looked into, Maritime Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff Keiji Akahoshi stated in a press conference yesterday: "We plan to carry it out by downsizing its scale." The drill will be conducted as early as mid-November by reducing the scale to one-third of that conducted so far. The U.S Navy will likely take part in it. The drill has been held every year since 1954 when the Self Defense Forces was founded.

(7) Aso cabinet made of postal rebels? Three postal rebels given cabinet posts, two rebels receive Kantei posts; Demonstrates stance

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of separating himself from Koizumi's policy influence

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 1, 2008

Prime Minister Taro Aso yesterday appointed Shunichi Yamaguchi, a postal rebel and former senior vice minister of internal affairs and communications, as special advisor to the prime minister (on the revitalization of local economies). Three postal rebels, including Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone, were picked as members of the Aso cabinet. Tadayoshi Konoike, another postal rebel, was named deputy chief cabinet secretary, a Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) staff member. Aso is demonstrating his policy of reversing the Koizumi reform initiative by giving postal rebels important posts.

At a press conference yesterday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura denied a connection between the appointment of Yamaguchi and the reform policy line, saying: "It is not that (the prime minister) dared to give a cabinet post to a postal rebel. It is a result of his effort to keep the principle of placing the right person in the right position. None (of postal rebels appointed) has raised any objection to the reform policy."

During the LDP presidential campaign, Aso asserted that he would put priority on economic stimulus measures rather than on structural reforms, but he did not reject postal privatization. But as if to endorse a policy of separating himself from Koizumi's policy influence, Aso has awarded postal rebels cabinet posts one after the other.

In the Abe and Fukuda cabinets, only one or two postal rebels were given cabinet posts. Aso, however, gave three postal rebels cabinet posts and two postal rebels Kantei posts. In an interview with the Tokyo Shimbun yesterday, Nakasone stressed: "The LDP is liberal and tolerant. It has tried to use each politician's capability."

The resignation of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Nariaki Nakayama is a low point in Aso's selection of his cabinet members, even though Aso picked Nakayama as the most suitable person for that post. If the postal rebels Aso picked his cabinet members fail to exercise their capabilities, the Aso cabinet would be criticized for reversing the reform line.

Postal rebels given cabinet or Kantei posts in Abe, Fukuda and Aso cabinets

First Abe cabinet None
Second Abe cabinet Defense Minister Koumura
First Fukuda cabinet Foreign Minister Koumura

Second Fukuda cabinet Foreign Minister Koumura
Consumer Administration Minister Noda
Aso cabinet Foreign Minister Nakasone
Consumer Administration Minister Noda
Declining Birthrate Minister Yuko Obuchi
Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike
Advisor to the Prime Minister Yamaguchi

(8) Aso's political group received 1.5 million yen in donations from firm punished under Antimonopoly Law

AKAHATA (Page 15) (Full)

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October 1, 2008

The Liberal Democratic Party's No. 8 Fukuoka Prefecture constituency chapter, headed by Prime Minister Taro Aso, received 1.5 million yen in donations over a five-year period from 2003 through 2007 from the petrochemical manufacturer Tokuyama (in Shunan City, Yamaguchi Prefecture), which was ordered to end its illegal business practices, according to official documents shown yesterday.

The revelation of improper donations to Aso follows that of donations from Yamato Jushi Kogaku (Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo), whose president was arrested this August over a bribery case involving a national hospital.

According to the chapter's political funds reports and Tokuyama, Tokuyama donated 300,000 yen every year to the chapter. A member of the prime minister's local office (in Iizuka City, Fukuoka Prefecture) commented: "We have received and reported donations in a proper way."

Tokuyama was advised by the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) in May 2001 to end its plastic price-fixing practice in violation of the Antimonopoly Law.

In August of last year, the FTC handed down a judgment recognizing its violation, but Tokuyama filed a complaint with the Tokyo High Court, seeking the cancellation of the FTC judgment. This case is still pending in court.

It has already been learned that the Fukuoka chapter and Aso's funds management group Sowai-kai had received 4 million yen in donations over a 13-year period from 1995 until 2007 from Yamato Jushi Kogaku.

(9) Five cabinet members affiliated with the educational policy clique in the Diet received 11.97 million yen from firms in educational facilities group, with 2.52 million yen to Aso, 2.6 million yen to Kawamura

AKAHATA (Page 15) (Full)

October 1, 2008

The Aso cabinet is noteworthy for the many lawmakers from the educational policy clique (bunkyo-zoku), including those who have held the post of education, science and technology minister. It has been found that five cabinet members who are members of the education clique, including Prime Minister Aso himself and Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura, had received a total of 11.97 million yen over a period between 2004 and 2006 from the Research Institute of Educational Facilities, an incorporated organization that served as a point of contact for collusive relationships among politicians, bureaucrats and business leaders in construction projects commissioned by the Education, Science and Technology Ministry.

Akahata found the above facts by researching the political funds reports from 2004 through 2006 of the Liberal Democratic Party's constituency chapters headed by the lawmakers belonging to the education policy clique, including the Aso-headed No.8 Fukuoka Prefecture constituency chapter.

The late Kakuji Yanagawa, a former House of Councillor member,

chaired the Research Institute of Educational Facilities for about 20 years. Many of successive executives there came from the Educational Facilities Planning Department of the said ministry.

According to the political funds reports, Prime Minister Aso, who served as parliamentary vice education minister and as LDP Education Division head, received a total of 2.52 million yen from five member companies, including 900,000 yen from Techno Ryowa Ltd. and 600,000 yen from Dai-Dan Co.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura continued to receive donations from companies that were prosecuted for bid-rigging practices even after their problems were disclosed. He received 2.6 million yen from 10 companies, including 360,000 yen each from Hasegawa Sports Facilities Co. and Okumura Corp. Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone accepted 1.71 million yen from five companies, including 360,000 yen from Kokuyo Co. and 410,000 yen from Tonets Corp.

State Minister in Charge of Declining Birthrate Yuko Obuchi, who assumed the post of parliamentary secretary in the education ministry, was given a total of 4.74 million yen in donations from nine firms, including 1.5 million yen from Sanko Air Conditioning Co. and 720,000 yen from Uchida Yoko Co.

Education, Science and Technology Minister Ryu Shionoya, who held the vice ministerial post in the education ministry, also received 400,000 yen from Yahagi Construction Co.

Many companies in the Research Institute of Educational Facilities have given executive posts to facilities department heads at national universities and local construction office heads who had moved from the Educational Facilities Planning Department. Donations to the lawmakers affiliated with education affairs are part of the collusive relationship that exists among politicians, bureaucrats and business executives.

SCHIEFFER